

FROM THE CELL TO THE WORLD

against each other by hate and rancour, whereas we should be bound by the bond of divine and most ardent charity."¹

And to Beatrice, whose pride and avarice were notorious throughout Italy, she writes "with desire of seeing you clothed in the robe of most ardent charity, so and in such wise that you may be the means and instrument of reconciling your husband with Christ sweet Jesus and with His vicar, Christ on earth. I am certain that, if the virtue of charity is in you, it is impossible but that your husband will feel the warmth of it." ² From a letter addressed to Catherine by Elizabeth of Bavaria, the wife of Bernabo's son Marco (Petrarca's godson), we find that she had thoughts of coming in person to Milan. Elizabeth expresses her deep disappointment at hearing that the Saint has changed her plans, and humbly commends her husband and little four-year-old daughter Anna to her prayers.⁸

With these first political letters, Catherine entered into the national life of her country. The lords of Italy and the prelates of the Church had learned by now that her words had a power not their own, nor was either party unprepared or unwilling to make use of it for their own ends and advantage.

In the letters to the Cardinal of Bologna and his Milanese adversary alike, Catherine refers to the Crusade. From the beginning of his pontificate, Gregory had urged the powers of Christendom to make peace among themselves, and turn their arms against the Turks and Saracens. In particular, he had besought King Louis of Hungary, as the persecutor of infidels and defender of the Catholic Faith, to use the great power that the Lord had given him, " for the defence of His people whom He has redeemed by the shedding of His most precious blood,

¹ Letter 28 (191). In the bull of the Pope against Bernabo and Galeazzo, which is dated January 7, 1373 (Raynaldus, vii. pp. 235-237)* the former is accused of having tortured certain priests to death with appalling atrocity. The matter is evidently that to which Catherine refers, and the date of the papal bull, together with the authenticated presence of Bernabo's envoy in Siena, seems to fix this as the occasion of her letter.

³ Letter 29 (319).

⁸ *Lettere del discepolo di S. Caterina*, 2.